



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

lence of the system. Mr Wrifford, by long habit, and perhaps a peculiar original aptitude, seems to possess that happy secret in all successful instruction, of seizing those moments, when the attention of the pupils can be caught and effectively operated upon.

Our limited space will not allow us to enter into a general detail of the interesting particulars, relating to the author's method of instruction; nor could we, if so disposed, lay before the reader anything like a just view to be derived from inspecting the method, as taught under his own direction. The style of his composition is peculiar, sometimes eccentric, and not always in good taste, yet these defects can detract nothing from the merit of his system, nor from his reputation, as an excellent, successful, and thoroughly practised teacher of Chirography. The elegance and beauty of the drawings, which accompany the work, afford complete proof, that he has spared neither pains nor expense to render it the most finished of the kind, which has come before the public.

4.—*A Summary View of America, comprising a Description of the Face of the Country, and of several of the principal Cities; and Remarks on the social, moral, and political Character of the People; being the Result of Observations and Inquiries during a Journey in the United States.* By AN ENGLISHMAN. 8vo. pp. 503. London. 1824.

So much abuse and folly have been published in England, in books purporting to be travels in the United States, and so much ignorance and stupidity, as well as unfairness, have been palmed upon the public in the works of this description, that all interest for them seems to have died away, even with the most inquisitive and reading part of the community. It is mainly on this consideration of the subject, that we can account for the fact of the 'Summary View' not having been published in this country, although it issued from the press more than a year and a half ago in England, and is on the whole written with as much candor, as any person could be supposed to have towards a foreign country, and evidently contains the results of close observation, and no small degree of knowledge. To those, who judge only from experience of the past, this will be thought to be saying a great deal in favor of an English traveller in America, but as great an anomaly as it may seem, we nevertheless think, that this meed of approbation is at least due to the 'Englishman,' who has favored us with the volume under notice. And we will add, moreover, that, in spite of his prejudices, which it sometimes costs him a hard struggle to keep down, he writes with as good a spirit, and with as open a disposition to learn the reality, and report it fairly, as any American could reasonably desire.

The author tells some truths not the most flattering to our self prepossessions, nor grateful to an American ear, but it is our duty to listen to them with patience, and to profit by such as it gives us no pleasure to hear. His remarks are now and then tinged with a spice of *cockneyism*, and he sometimes has a gossiping way of relating incidents, which detract somewhat from the dignity of his work, but when these are accompanied with a good temper, and a philosophical resolution not to be biassed by appearances, nor to draw hasty conclusions, we can easily endure them. It may be safely believed, that the author had it not in his thoughts to make any false impressions, in regard to America, or to indulge a vein of humor or sarcasm at the expense of the people, whose manners and character he aims to describe.

The following topics, among others, constitute the heads of his chapters, namely ; face of the country ; conveniences of travelling ; men ; women ; domestic life ; spirit of conversation ; patriotism ; hospitality ; politeness ; religion ; slavery ; colonisation society ; English language ; oratory ; literature ; government ; political parties ; law and jurisprudence ; manufactures ; fine arts ; morals ; national character. Now it is quite evident, that several of these subjects are such, as no foreigner, who had resided but a few months in the country, could be qualified to discuss with any fulness or pertinency. In remarking upon them, therefore, it is not surprising, that our traveller should frequently say little to the purpose, and enter into speculations betraying at the same time his ignorance and his indiscretion. What, for instance, could he be supposed to know of our literature, government, political parties, jurisprudence, and national character ? These things are not to be learnt in a month or a year. The author shows, that he has been industrious in collecting as many facts pertaining to them, as his limited means would allow ; and that he aims to represent these in a fair and proper light, according to the best of his knowledge ; but after all, his important facts are exceedingly scanty, and his notions crude. It could not be otherwise. The chapters on slavery and the slave trade exhibit little else, than a total ignorance of the origin and history of our political and civil institutions, and the credulity, benevolence, and amiable zeal of the author. His hatred of slavery is just, but misapplied ; his visions are bright, but airy as the dreams of an enthusiast, or the mists of an autumnal morning. He talks of our literature without reason or discrimination, selecting books for his criticism, of which no American ever heard, and sometimes passing judgment with a pertness, which no wise man of any nation would approve. He was much scandalised at the violation of syntax, and otherwise faulty style of the Annual Report of one of the New York Charity Schools, and a publication of the Philadelphia Society for promoting Agriculture. Some writer in

the Reports of the Colonisation Society amused him with the loftiness of his flights. From these sources he draws the first elements of his opinion of our national literature. He then goes on to examine books, and of Mr Jefferson's Notes on Virginia he confesses, that, 'exclusive of the bigotry and prejudice conspicuous in it, the performance is creditable to him.' How indulgent a critic ! The Life of Franklin 'exceedingly interests us,' but we hear nothing of his powerful works on politics, civic economy, and philosophy ; these it may be presumed our worthy Englishman had not found time to read. But what surprises us most is, that our country is famous for its travellers in Africa and Asia. 'Now and then,' says the critic, 'some one makes an exploratory journey into Africa and Asia ; yet how little have they contributed to cosmography.' How little indeed ! Not a single cosmographer, we believe, adorns with his presence any part of the United States, whose renown can justly be claimed as a nation's boast, unless it be he of the west, whose struggles have been to get at the centre, rather than to roam on the surface of the earth. We must lament our ignorance, at never having heard of any of these 'exploratory journeys' into Asia and Africa by our countrymen. Since the days of the ill fated Ledyard, we know not the American, who has turned his face to the perilous enterprise of exploring Africa, unless it be the shipwrecked, renegade sailor, known by the name of Robert Adams, who called himself an American, and who had the address to deceive a whole bench of lords and gentlemen in London, and induce them to publish in a spacious quarto, under the sanction of their names, a fabricated narrative of a journey to Timbuctoo. This fabrication is not a sin for which our literature is accountable. But we have not time to follow the author through his chapter on American literature. He tells us, that, while he was in this country, he wrote for some journal a review of 'an octavo volume published at Boston,' but he had 'forgotten both the author's name and the title of the book.' We may have been precipitate in speaking with so little respect of the opinions of a professed reviewer, but still our judgment must be, that he has meddled with a subject, with which he was very little acquainted, and that it requires all his good nature to redeem the blunders, into which by his critical propensity he has been unwittingly drawn.

The author encountered some marvellous incidents in America, but not more, perhaps, than usually occur to travellers as enterprising as himself. He was quite shocked to hear certain New Yorkers pretend in conversation, that their city would in a century become the rival of London, and affirms that such a thing is 'only to be mentioned to show its absurdity.' It has been rumored at home, to be sure, that the New Yorkers are beginning to assume consequence to themselves in anticipation of their future greatness,

which is to grow out of the length of the grand Canal, and other advantages pertaining to the great commercial emporium of the western world, but we have not till now been informed of their habit of besieging foreigners on this account, till they deserved the charge of absurdity. The writer also makes the discovery, that 'no city in America is under more mob influence than New York;' and he puts in a feeling protest against the savage custom of 'using pigs for scavengers,' a practice, he adds, 'of which many of the inhabitants are ashamed.' It is a pity, that the New Yorkers should be ashamed of their own customs, and we leave the matter for them to consider and digest, subjoining only the further declaration of our traveller, who speaks authoritatively on the subject, that 'pigs ought not to be allowed to be kept even in a yard within the boundary of a city.' Such New Yorkers, as would be further informed, must consult the volume itself.

In our good city of Boston the author resided but a short time, and pays us only a passing tribute. He ascended the dome of the State House, and says the view from it is the finest in America. Next to this in extent and beauty, he considers the view from the Washington monument in Baltimore. For the edification of those, whom it may concern, we give, in his own words, an account of the chief event, which happened to him in our city.

'I was present,' says he, 'at a meeting of the Debating Society of Boston, when a question was proposed for discussion on the policy of prohibiting usury. The first speaker was a short, jolly man, who seemed much more likely to please a dinner party by acting as their chairman, than to throw light on an abstract question. He began with diffidence; a good symptom; but after blundering through his speech, bewildering himself and his auditory, he concluded with no more confidence than he manifested at the commencement. The second speaker was quite as obscure, though with rather more assurance. The third, with some appearance of method in the handling of his subject, and with the air of a man, who is to bear down all opposition, floundered in the mud of his own spreading, till he had tired himself, and blinded those about him. The chairman was about to put the question, when a gentleman suggested that if the debate were adjourned, some further light would be thrown on it at another meeting. Some one might have told him, that there had been "no light, but rather darkness visible." The motion for adjournment was carried, and the meeting dispersed, having, as I thought, shown a most exemplary patience.'

The author met with occasional troubles and inconveniences of a personal nature, in the course of his travels, as well as moving testimonies of the negligent habits of Americans, which ought not to pass unnoticed. 'Let me mention,' he says, 'that I went into a draper's shop at Fredericksburgh, in Virginia, to purchase a night-

cap, but no such thing was to be had. I tried a second, and was told that no dealer in the town kept nightcaps, as the people did not use them. At Richmond I obtained one.' To the credit of Virginia let it be spoken, that it has one town in which nightcaps are both used and sold. This affair of the nightcap brings to mind, by the laws of association we presume, another passage in that part of the author's work, in which he is treating of national character. He is complaining of the 'want of exactness in the domestic and other common transactions of life;' and here, we are sorry to say, he is alluding particularly to the ladies of these United States. 'This want of exactness,' he observes, 'is obvious in the deportment of female servants, whom I have seen, when not actually engaged in waiting on the company, leaning on their elbows near the door or window. Now it is evident, that their mistresses would teach them to adopt a more becoming attitude, if they themselves did not share in the prevalent carelessness. I am inclined to ascribe the custom of female servants not wearing caps to the same disposition. What can be said in excuse for their mistresses, who might surely persuade them to adopt a dress less disgusting, than that of heads of hair loose and dirty like mops? After they have finished their work, they are it is true sufficiently neat; but how is it possible to keep their hair in order without caps when engaged in it?' Ah, indeed, how is it possible? This question we must leave to the American ladies to answer; desiring them, however, not to indulge any unkindly feelings towards the traveller for these gentle hints, as in numerous instances he has bestowed upon them a full measure of compliments for their remarkable qualities, and a profusion of thanks and expressions of gratitude for their civil and hospitable attentions to him.

In short, we are in sober earnest prepared to say, that the American must be hard to please, who can find it in his heart to censure the prevailing tone and spirit of this work. The author undertakes too much, and falls greatly short of his aims; had he confined himself to a narrower compass, and talked only of what he knew, he would have been more wise, and doubtless committed fewer mistakes. As it is, his volume is in all respects superior to three quarters of the books of travels written by Englishmen, which have been republished in this country. Why this has been suffered to pass by we know not, except from the cause suggested at the beginning of these remarks. It will do Americans no harm to hear their foibles, their national prejudices and follies exposed, by intelligent and candid foreigners; this will be one way of convincing us, that we are not the most enlightened people on earth, as it is said we boast of being; especially can we endure these things, when we have the privilege of laughing as much as we please at the ignorance, presumption, and self importance too often displayed

by the writers, who undertake to reveal our faults, and become the censors of our manners. Indignation must sometimes be excited by downright stupidity and impudence, but for the most part the effusions, which have gone out from the English press respecting America, have been worthy of little else than neglect for their worthlessness, or contempt for their vulgarity and falsehood.

We trust a better era is approaching; and, indeed, it may be reckoned as an encouraging symptom of the commencement of such an era, that American literature, such as it is, begins to be better understood than formerly in England. Many of our popular works are now reprinted and circulated in that country. Mr John Miller, publisher and bookseller in New Bridge Street, London, has recently brought out English editions of the 'Pilot,' 'Redwood,' 'Lionel Lincoln,' 'Poinsett's Mexico,' 'John Bull in America,' 'Percival's Poems,' and that interesting little tale, the 'Travellers,' by the author of Redwood. These we understand have all met with such success, as to be satisfactory to the publisher. Mr Miller deserves the commendation of our countrymen, for the strong interest he has taken in making our literature known to the British public. He has established a library, which he calls the 'American Library,' and in which he endeavors to collect all the valuable American publications of the day, and such books of anterior date as he can obtain. It will be doing a service to the literature of the country, if authors and publishers will keep this institution in mind, and send new works to Mr Miller, to be deposited in his library and open to the inspection of reading persons in London. The merits of many performances will thus become known there, which may be thought adapted to publication in that country, but which might otherwise never come to the knowledge of a London publisher. We may here add, that the circulation of our own Journal in England has increased much more of late, than at any former period. This is a slight proof, we flatter ourselves, that the edge of prejudice is wearing off. In France our book has the honor of being inserted on the proscribed list; and it is seized at the customhouse, whenever a straggling copy seeks hospitality in the dominions of his newly crowned majesty, Charles the Tenth. But we have the consolation of seeing its name in good company there, and as we do not write for the edification of kings, nor the slaves of kings, we shall not repine at this mark of disapprobation, with which our labors are branded by those, who fear the contagion of liberty and truth.
